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# Dreading He Knew Not What: Masculinities, Structural Spaces, Law and the Gothic in The Castle of Otranto, Pride and Prejudice, and Wuthering Heights

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Dreading He Knew Not What: Masculinities, Structural Spaces, and the Gothic in *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights*

“What we call real estate – the solid ground to build a house on – is the broad foundation on which nearly all the guilt of this world rests.” -Nathaniel Hawthorne

“The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don’t turn against him; they crush those beneath them.” -Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

## Introduction

This essay investigates the integral linkages between Gothic spaces and Gothic masculinities in three texts: Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, and Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. *The Castle of Otranto* was the first explicitly declared “Gothic story” published in 1764 and sets the template for subsequent developments in Gothic literature. *Pride and Prejudice* published in 1813 is a conventional love story that is usually not viewed as Gothic; however, I argue it serves as a useful counterpoint while also exhibiting intersections with the Gothic tradition. Finally, *Wuthering Heights* published in 1847 represents the new Victorian Gothic taking place within the contemporary English home rather than the exotic medieval castle. At the core of this examination is architecture, or more specifically, the physical constructions and built environments that comprise a man’s property. I explore how a man uses his property to construct, legitimize, and perform his identity. In the Female Gothic, the home is a place of anxiety for women, where patriarchal dominance and violence reign to constrain female agency. I argue that the home is also an anxiety-ridden space for men, who are similarly tyrannized by a force they have limited power to fight against: legality. The issue of property ownership as a means of defining masculine selfhood in these texts lead men to extreme, and arguably unnatural, resorts to cling to their coveted status as autonomous property holders and virile men.

A man's personhood is defined by his property ownership, yet this ownership is strictly bound in a web of laws that are often inherently unfair. Significant additions to these laws correspond with the rise of the Gothic novel. Common Law Doctrine II.i.13 written by Sir William Blackstone in 1776 specifically admits women from the process of property transmission and reinforces the system of primogeniture, which fixed the bequeathal of a father's property solely to that of his firstborn son. Ruth Anolik<sup>1</sup> conducts a compelling analysis of how this law contributes to female anxieties in the Female Gothic; however, this statute also has significant implications for men, which have heretofore been overlooked. That is, to pass down his property a father *must have a son*. This of course is the driving conflict in both *The Castle of Otranto* and *Pride and Prejudice*: neither Manfred nor Mr. Bennet has a son to inherit their property. Another noteworthy issue in the new Commonwealth Doctrine is that only the firstborn son has a place in the line of property transmission. Accordingly, being gendered male is not enough to guarantee property ownership and its corresponding security of identity. Though the issues of non-firstborn sons are beyond the scope of this investigation, they should be kept in consideration as an additional source of male anxiety in property ownership. Thus, legal issues of property ownership and inheritance are the source of immense anxiety for men and are key to a meaningful Gothic study of *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights*. In this excerpt from my senior thesis, I begin by contextualizing the importance of Gothic architecture and the literary scholarship of Men's Studies. I then analyze how the male characters in *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights* use structural spaces to legitimize and exert their autonomy, thus seeking to conform to the hegemonic ideal of masculinity. Yet due to issues of property ownership and inheritance, I argue that the home,

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<sup>1</sup> Anolik, Ruth Bienstock. "The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode." *Modern Language Studies* 33.1/2 (2003): pp. 24-43.

rather than bolstering masculine identity, is actually an anxiety-ridden space that challenges the men's performances of idyllic masculinity.

### **Situation in Gothic History and Scholarship**

Gothic history is inextricably linked to architecture. The Goths, Germanic barbarians, dismantled the architecture of the Roman Empire, both physically and metaphorically, through marauding, thus bringing the Western World into the Dark Ages. Roman and Greek architecture was founded on orders, which emphasize mathematically calculated balance and symmetry. Yet during the Middle Ages, the orders were often ignored and a new form of architecture evolved that had more free and non-uniform motifs; these included lofty towers and spires, the ogival or pointed arch, the ribbed vault, flying buttresses, lengthy galleries, and an arcade chamber called triforium<sup>2</sup>. During the Italian High Renaissance, this non-classical architecture became officially referred to as Gothic (Castle 679). Yet by the mid-fifteenth century, Renaissance architects vehemently condemned the Gothic form as “grotesque and bizarre, evocative indeed of the uncouth hordes among whom it had supposedly originated” (680). The Gothic was not embraced until the mid-seventeenth century in England, when economic and imperial advancement kindled an interest in constructing a national history based on ancient origins. Both political and literary discourse began referencing England's Gothic roots. As early as 1648 Nathaniel Bacon connects English law to a Gothic derivation: “Nor can any nation upon earth shew so much of the ancient Goth-ique law as this Island hath” (Bacon 96) and in 1690 Sir William Temple alludes to “the ancient Western Goths, our Ancestors” in his essay “Of Poetry” (Temple 86). After the Hanoverian succession of 1714, Britain was politically stable and increasingly prosperous, thus strengthening the demand for patriotic myths. Terry Castle asserts that the Goths were

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<sup>2</sup> A thorough definition and historical analysis of Gothic architecture in England can be found in Bond, Francis. *Gothic architecture in England : an analysis of the origin & development of English church architecture from the Norman conquest to the dissolution of the monasteries*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1905.

particularly attractive because of their valor in battle, inherent sense of justice, and purported chivalry to women; ultimately, the Goths became “primordial embodiments of a distinctively ‘British’ genius and cultural energy” (Castle 681). Consequently, newly powerful Whig leaders spearheaded a trend of neo-Gothic architecture. Chris Brooks explains that these Gothic constructions were designed to evoke the past and “say something about being British,” while concordantly representing and forging a contemporary national identity based on new liberties (Brooks 56). In addition to the political significance, Castle suggests another meaningful role of Gothic architecture in eighteenth century British culture. After two centuries of cold rationalism had dried the British imagination, suddenly, “Something about the looming, claustral grandeur of the Gothic cathedrals had a power, it seemed, of reawakening exactly that ‘scared awe’—a sense of vast, encompassing and imponderable spiritual forces—elsewhere absent from the world” (Castle 689). The Gothic space—massive, labyrinthine, and gloomy—enticed the imagination and begged to be filled.

Thus the Gothic architecture trend inspires a literary one, with Gothic castles as the genre’s primary setting. These cold stone structures exert a powerful, compulsory force on the human body of the literary characters and the actual readers. Castle describes Gothic literature as “intensely corporeal” (697) and explains, “The Gothic novel worked like caffeine... being first and foremost a stimulant, a kind of auto-intensifier, a way of feeling one’s own body” (698). Both characters and readers experience spontaneous surges of adrenaline in the Gothic setting because it targets the most innate fear of all animals: becoming prey. The Gothic castle, not based on the harmonious symmetry of the Greco-Roman tradition, is the quintessential disorderly space for immobilization and entrapment. This becomes a recurrent trope in eighteenth century Gothic fiction: a heroine is trapped or lost in a Gothic castle (or similarly

maze-like space, as the genre develops) and someone or something is menacing her.

Accordingly, the eighteenth century Gothic is inseparably linked with Gothic architecture as the setting for its plots of pursuit, violence, and insidious secrecy.

Gothic literature arose in the eighteenth century as an expression of anxieties regarding the ineffable: “the Thing<sup>3</sup>,” “*das Ding an sich*<sup>4</sup>,” “extimacy<sup>5</sup>,” “the closet<sup>6</sup>.” There is something unspeakably terrifying in society that can only be expressed in these Gothic spaces. Ellen Moers’s coining of the Female Gothic<sup>7</sup>, as referring to eighteenth century Gothic novels written by female authors, sparked a wave of critical work analyzing the expression of female fears under the oppressive and oftentimes abusive system of patriarchy. This theory rescued the Gothic canon from its previously marginalized status and used it to develop new feminist theories; however, the advent of poststructuralism has led to criticism of the Female Gothic for essentializing femininity, thereby driving the school into obsolescence.

Yet rather than being discarded, the Female Gothic should be looked at as a springboard by which to approach Gothic Studies of the eighteenth century canon and beyond. Certainly, the Gothic *does* relate to fears of oppression and gender conflict *is* a central theme. Yet the key here is gender conflict, and there are in fact *two* genders represented in the works: females and males. It is worthwhile to explore the Gothic in relation to the thus far disregarded masculine identity. Yet rather than creating a similarly essential Male Gothic, this study should build off of the critical innovations since Moers’s Female Gothic: most importantly, that identity is not as a singular one-dimensional expression, but rather a multifaceted and dynamic performance.

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<sup>3</sup> Farnell, Gary. “The Gothic And The Thing.” *Gothic Studies* 11.1 (2009) : 113-123. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn. Hazelton, PA: The Electronic Classic Series, 2013. Electronic.

<sup>5</sup> Lacan, Jaques. “Book XI.” *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Davison, Carol Margaret. “Gothic Architectonics: The Poetics And Politics Of Gothic Space.” *Papers On Language And Literature: A Journal For Scholars And Critics Of Language And Literature* 46.2 (2010): 136-163. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Moers, Ellen. *Literary Women*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday (Anchor), 1977. Print.

## **Situation in Men's Studies**

Thus far, I have framed this investigation within the Gothic's architectural and scholarly traditions, yet insufficient grounding has been laid for an understanding of what I mean when I say I will explore masculine identities in these texts. Integral to this analysis are the theories of Men's Studies, which owes its origin to Women's Studies, as Martin Danahay points out, because "masculinity as a term was not even available for analysis until feminist theory had denaturalized gender categories" (Danahay 3). Based on the theoretical framework of Women's Studies, Harry Brod asserts the aim of Men's Studies is, "to recapture the specificities of masculinities as specific and varying social, cultural, and historical formations alongside femininities, rather than as falsely universalized norms" (Brod 20). Yet R. W. Connell contends, "To recognize more than one kind of masculinity is only a first step. We have to examine the relations between them" (Connell 76). Connell rightly challenges the notion of an essential "hegemonic masculinity;" however, to understand the peripheral representations of masculinity it is first necessary to understand the central hegemonic definition.

Based on a review of contemporary scholarly literature, I have ascertained six factors of manliness that characterize the ideal male of the long nineteenth century. Before listing these six traits, first it is essential to note that by the Victorian period these masculine features are not exactly considered innate. Rather, the conventional notion was that "you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it" (Ruskin 72). Specifically, masculinity was trained by the Victorian public school system through "excessive devotion to athletic sports" (Stephen 173) and the masculinization process was completed by subsequent "men's jobs, requiring toughness and dominance" (Lawrence 52). This feature of masculinity is important to keep in mind, as it frames the idea that one's gender identity is constructed and refined via

performance of certain actions. With this frame, I will expound the six ideal masculine traits.

First, masculinity has a specifically physical character: the model man is strong and healthy.

Sportsmanship is essential, for it “indicated purity of mind and body, a spirit of masculine competitiveness” (54). Yet muscularity is not simply relegated to athleticism for athletics sake but is conflated with “muscular Christianity,” a term popularized by clergyman T. C. Sandars in his review of Charles Kingsley’s *Two Years Ago* (1857) in the *Saturday Review* (Watson, Weir, and Friend 3). Mid-nineteenth century actor Wilson Barrett capitalized on this blend of athletic physical attractiveness and “evangelical fervour” and earned himself an extensive fan base of working class women (Lawrence 52). Such evangelicalism is expressed in an overt display of morality and chivalry. Moreover, Laurenz Volkmann argues that the ideal male often performs “a constant effort of closing oneself off to the Other” (Volkmann 143). This is to say the ideal man is of mother England and certainly not related to anything foreign, exotic, or strange.

Another crucial trait for the ideal man is self-discipline, expressed by James Eli Adams as ascetic manhood. Additionally, Adams asserts that masculinity should be associated “above all with honest, straightforward speech and action, shorn of any hint of subtlety or equivocation” (Adams 14). Finally, in a discussion of classical Augustan manliness, Isabel Karremann asserts that “autonomy was the most comprehensive requirement for manliness: it meant, first and foremost, financial independence from political or social opinion; such moral integrity was supplemented by an independence from the emotional ties that bind a man to this world and its trivial occupations” (Karremann 110). Thus, the ideal man represented by the hegemonic ideology cultivates and exhibits the following traits: 1) Virility, as demonstrated by strength and sportsmanship; 2) Chivalry and morality; 3) Intent to exclude the Other; 4) Asceticism; 5) Candor; and 6) Autonomy.



The men of *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights* all exhibit characteristics conforming to this hegemonic definition of masculinity. In showing how they do so, I do not aim to define or confine the male characters to a specific expression of masculinity. I will ultimately make clear how each male character performs a unique variation of masculinity that dissents from the ideal, yet for now I will use Ludwig Wittgenstein's anti-Plutonic theory of "family resemblances"<sup>8</sup> to demonstrate similar attributes across texts that develop the master narrative of hegemonic masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity will serve as a reference for subsequent comparison<sup>9</sup>.

The process of masculinity being "hammered into you" is best portrayed in the case of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. As a child, Heathcliff is constantly thrashed, pinched, and threatened by Hindley, which makes him "hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment" (Brontë 24). This physical roughness in childhood lays the foundation for Heathcliff's future manly "hard constitution" (223). Moreover, after enduring years of physical roughness, Heathcliff is expelled by Hindley—who becomes master of the Heights upon the death of his father (Heathcliff's benefactor)—from his sedentary studies within the home to work as a common servant in the fields. This substantially lowers Heathcliff's position at the Heights and provokes Catherine to declare that her brother's "treatment of Heathcliff is atrocious" (13). Yet, it is actually pivotal for Heathcliff's masculine development that he be ejected from the home. Adams contends, "manhood cannot be sustained within domesticity, since the ideal is incompatible with ease" (Adams 10). Edgar Linton, the boy of Thrushcross Grange, is educated in the home and does not develop into the overtly physically masculine man that Heathcliff does. In fact, Linton will later

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<sup>8</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations (PI)*. Ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> In the interest of space, the following section has been excised. This section offers close readings examining how Manfred, Theodore, Mr. Bennet, Darcy, Hindley, and Heathcliff exhibit traits of the hegemonic masculinity.

tremble and pale at the very potential of a fight with Heathcliff, provoking Heathcliff's intense derision in calling him a "milk-blooded coward" (Brontë 78). Edgar Linton, who remains in the home, does not have the benefit of Heathcliff's rough upbringing to instill him with the physical qualities of manliness. In contrast, working the land, as Lawrence points out, is a "man's job." The work may degrade Heathcliff socially, but it ultimately allows him to develop into a physically impressive man, "tall, athletic, and well-formed" (65). Thus, the roughness that dominates Heathcliff's childhood and teenage years crucially lays the foundation for his masculine identity as an adult.

Theodore similarly arises as a young man from a rough upbringing. At five he was abducted by pirates along with his mother, while his father, the Count of Falconara, is fighting in the crusades. His mother dies in captivity but young Theodore is eventually returned to Sicily by a Christian vessel; though, without knowledge of his father, he grows up a common village laborer. Even more so than *Wuthering Heights*, class plays an integral role in the dynamics of *Otranto*. In fact, before Theodore's true identity as heir to the principedom of Otranto is known, Manfred doubts Theodore's chivalry (a key masculine virtue) due to his class. When Theodore declares that he would gladly die knowing he had aided the Princess Isabella escape Manfred's clutches, the prince furiously responds, "a peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments" (Walpole 40). Manfred attributes masculine expression of chivalry to class; however, his connection is erroneous because Theodore, the peasant, is in fact displaying genuine, noble chivalry. It may be argued that since Theodore is the true heir to Otranto, he possesses some innate chivalry associated with his true class, though it be unknown to him. Yet, rather than inherent nobility, it is also probable that Theodore's rough upbringing as a farm laborer is what allows him to express such powerfully masculine traits. In analyzing the

Victorian Novel, Michael Kimmel argues, “the city feminizes men, removing them from the land (the source of productive labor and hence diligence and masculine discipline) and exposing these rough-hewn rural men to the effete life of the fop” (Kimmel 104). If the city feminizes men, then, conversely, the land masculinizes them. Though setting *Otranto* in medieval Italy removes the possibility of Theodore becoming a city fop, his connection to the land still impresses upon him a definitively masculine physical air that will define his future manly conduct as a physical protector of damsels in distress.

While Theodore’s willingness to die in protecting Isabella represents medieval chivalry, Darcy’s behavior in *Pride and Prejudice* represents nineteenth century chivalry. Not facing such melodramatic situations as life and death, the nineteenth century gallant must content himself with showing attentive courtesy to women in their daily lives. Darcy performs the modern exhibition of chivalry when asking Elizabeth to dance: he “with grave propriety, requested to be allowed the honour of her hand” (Austen 32). In contrast to Theodore’s intensely melodramatic avowal of gallant, death defying protection, Darcy’s tone is notably somber and rigid. The proposition is steeped in decorum or “propriety” so as to convey to the woman that he respects her in this social space according to its social rules. Yet the proposition also subtly touches on the medieval chivalric idea of honoring someone above one’s self. Darcy requests “to be *allowed* the honour of her hand,” that is, it is hers to grant and such a bestowal is coveted as a worthy distinction. Darcy, of course, indubitably considers himself worthy of such esteem and is surprised by Elizabeth’s repeated rejection of his advances. Still, he continues to petition with, and generally maintain, a notable sense of dignity and composure, prompting Elizabeth to note, “Mr. Darcy is all politeness” (32).

The athletic requirements of ideal masculinity are also best exhibited by Heathcliff, Theodore, and Darcy. Upon his return after three years mysterious absence, Heathcliff is often portrayed as “taller and bigger altogether” than any of the men present in *Wuthering Heights* and this description is accompanied by repeated physical exhibitions of his superior muscularity (141). In a physical altercation with Hindley, the servant Nelly describes how Heathcliff, “kicked and trampled on him, and dashed his head repeatedly against the flags, holding me with one hand, meantime, to prevent me summoning Joseph” (121). Though the brutality of this fight is disturbing, Heathcliff’s strength is truly impressive. Not only is he dashing a full grown, hardy man against the flagstones, but he is doing so with only one hand while using the other to contain a struggling woman (who may not be all that physically strong but is likely scrappily aggressive in her thrashing).

Theodore exhibits similarly masculine strength while performing a more chivalric masculine deed. Upon being challenged by a knight before the cavern where Isabella has hidden, “The valour that had so long been smothered in [Theodore’s] breast broke forth at once; he rushed impetuously on the Knight, whose pride and wrath were not less powerful incentives to hardy deeds. The combat was furious, but not long. Theodore wounded the Knight in three several places, and at last disarmed him as he fainted by the loss of blood” (Walpole 62). Though the depiction of the combat is less vivid and poignantly violent than Heathcliff’s pulverizing of Hindley, Theodore demonstrates similar virility in conquering a powerful foe. In fact, Theodore’s physical prowess is perhaps more laudable than Heathcliff’s, because the latter’s combatant is a drunkard (less physically threatening) while Theodore’s adversary turns out to be the illustrious Marquis of Vicenza who fought in the crusades. Yet both cases are clear portrayals of what it means to be a physically fit, dominantly muscular man.

Darcy, for his part, does not engage in any physical altercations, for they would be out of place in *Pride and Prejudice*'s setting in the upper-middle class towns of contemporary England. However, without combat, Darcy's impressively masculine build is conveyed by Bingley: "I assure you, that if Darcy were not such a great tall fellow, in comparison with myself, I should not pay him half so much deference. I declare I do not know a more awful object than Darcy, on particular occasions, and in particular places; at his own house especially" (Austen 54). Bingley reiterates that Darcy, like Heathcliff, is remarkably tall; however, in Darcy's case this height serves more than brute force. Rather, Bingley makes an explicit connection between height and non-physical power. His use of "deference" is a particularly powerful admission of Darcy's superiority and his own submission to his friend's will. Bingley further links Darcy's physical embodiment to his estate, asserting that the man is rendered even more "awful," or worthy of awe, in his home. Bingley's statement is essentially the basis of this thesis: a man is both physically and mentally linked to his property, and the state of this property is crucial to his performance of masculinity. In Darcy's case, he is a tall man (making him physically powerful), which mirrors and substantiates his mental power. Moreover, this physical and mental power is elevated within the bounds of his estate, allowing him to further perform the strength of his masculinity. This cursory analysis will soon be expounded, for the aim of this section is but to show how Darcy matches the hegemonic ideal of physically strong masculinity.

The act of closing oneself off from the Other as an attempt to validate and bolster one's own masculine identity is repeatedly conveyed in *Wuthering Heights* by both Hindley and Edgar Linton in relation to Heathcliff. Heathcliff, a child acquired from unknown origins, "a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect" is routinely represented as physically different from the other male characters (Brontë 3). Hindley and Edgar both capitalize on this difference to exclude Heathcliff;

thereby, exerting a dominion over him that reinforces their own masculine power. As children, when Heathcliff extorts (successfully employing both logic and emotion in his argument) Hindley to give him his colt, the defeated Hindley exclaims, “Take my colt, Gipsy... And I pray that he may break your neck: take him, and be damned, you beggarly interloper! and wheedle my father out of all he has: only afterwards show him what you are, imp of Satan.—And take that, I hope he’ll kick out your brains!” (26). Even as a teenager, Hindley is keenly aware of the Other’s richly nasty connotations. First, the term gipsy is clearly derogative and is a reminder of Heathcliff’s Otherness within the Earnshaw family. Hindley challenges and excludes Heathcliff as a pseudo-family member based on this Otherness. Second, Hindley connects gipsy-ness to two traits: poverty and swindling. Thus, Hindley is not only attacking Heathcliff’s inherently lower social status but also implying—indeed, convicting—Heathcliff of stealing their father’s wealth and property (and love, as I will later argue). Ultimately, Heathcliff as an Otherized being is an “imp of Satan,” a child of evil, morally beneath Hindley. For all of this, Hindley justifies Heathcliff’s brains being “kicked out” by the colt and implicitly raises himself far above the gipsy degenerate, crucially in the moment when that degenerate has just triumphed over him in argument to gain a valuable piece of property (in the children’s eyes).

Edgar Linton is less aggressive in his Otherization of Heathcliff, but also more physically exclusive. Upon learning of Heathcliff’s return, Edgar is shocked: “‘What! the gipsy—the ploughboy?’ he cried” to which Nelly hushes him and responds, “‘She’d [Catherine] be sadly grieved to hear you” (64). It is notable that Edgar avoids using Heathcliff’s actual name and first characterizes him by his Otherized appearance, rather than his role as a ploughboy at Wuthering Heights. Though Edgar would certainly have known Heathcliff better in the latter capacity, the former serves as a stronger argument for his underlying aim: to exclude Heathcliff from

Thrushcross Grange. A dark-skinned gipsy has no place at the Grange, a place that has always been linked with heightened social decorum and manners. Edgar's use of the term "gipsy" contains undoubtedly negative implications, as evidenced by Nelly's quick hushing of the label. That is, the term would upset Catherine because it is a deprecatory exclusionary designation. At the heart of Edgar excluding Heathcliff from Thrushcross Grange, is Edgar excluding Heathcliff from his relationship with Catherine. Thus, Edgar's Otherization of Heathcliff serves to eliminate a romantic adversary and secure his masculine identity as husband.

While Hindley and Edgar distance themselves from the Other by rendering a male rival as Other, Darcy estranges himself from Otherness in different manner: by abstaining from a specific activity. At a ball, Sir Williams presses Darcy to dance, proclaiming, "There is nothing like dancing after all. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished society" (Austen 31). Darcy wittily responds, "Certainly, sir, and it has the advantage also of being in vogue amongst the less polished societies of the world. Every savage can dance" (31). Sir Williams expresses the commonly held view that dancing is both a pleasurable activity and one appropriate for the high classes of society. However, Darcy's flippant reply challenges this conventional notion and explicitly relates the act of dancing to the savage Other. In making this connection while concordantly refusing to dance, Darcy implicitly excludes himself from the Other and advances a hegemonic masculinity superior to the "savage."

Another masculine archetype that Darcy epitomizes is Adam's ascetic masculinity, for he imposes a rigorous discipline on himself and shows an express lack of enjoyment in his activities. This is also exemplified in Darcy's recurrent detestation (his word) for dancing. Darcy declares the activity "unsupportable" unless "I am particularly acquainted with my partner" (19). Darcy's revulsion to dancing can, in one sense, be viewed as an act of rejecting pleasure, or as

Sir Williams calls it “a charming amusement” (31). Darcy, the proud Ascetic, is above such recreation. Yet Darcy adds that he can tolerate dancing when he is “particularly acquainted” with his partner. This detail shows another form of Darcy’s self-denial, that is, an abstinence from new social interactions. Balls, and their primary activity, dancing, are designed to foster pleasant social discourse in a diverting environment. As a handsome, rich, and novel figure in the neighborhood, at such events Darcy “drew the attention of the room” (18). Yet he does not take advantage of these attentions or even remotely engage in the setting of social pleasures. The Bennet family attributes Darcy’s abstinence to “abominable pride” (80), making him “above his company, and above being pleased” (18). In this light, Darcy’s austerity is not extolled as a masculine virtue. In fact, the discovery of his pride immediately transforms the once handsomely described face of this “fine figure of a man” into “a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance” (18). This perception challenges Adams’s argument for ascetic masculinity as a virtue. However, to debunk Adams it would be necessary to prove that the Bennet’s perception is correct; that is, to show that Darcy’s abstinence from dancing and social interactions derives from an “abominable pride” that is inherently negative. Yet, the Bennet’s perception is wrong. “Abominable pride” is not really pride at all, but something else: vanity. Young Mary Bennet, though normally pedantic, shows surprisingly clear insight in postulating, “Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us” (27). Darcy does not abstain from dancing because he is motivated by how others perceive him. In fact, he is encouraged by Bingley, Sir William, and Bingley’s sisters to dance so as to better his public appearance. Darcy refrains because of a purely self-disciplined nature that denies the pleasure of such interactions. This is not the *result* of pride, but rather the *cause* of it. Ascetic behavior is the basis of Darcy’s sound masculine identity of composure, dignity, and pride. His self-denial,



natural attractiveness, and inherited wealth give Darcy, as Miss Charlotte Lucas says, “A *right* to be proud” (26).

Candor as a masculine ideal is expressed in all three texts by the “most masculine” character of each work: Theodore, Darcy, and Heathcliff. In being interrogated by the furious and formidable Manfred, Theodore sincerely avers, “My veracity is dearer to me than my life... nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other” (Walpole 32). Theodore’s language employs elevated heroic diction, yet nevertheless has a clear denotation. That is to say, the words are devoid of connotation, unlike the majority of the language in *Otranto*; they are candid. Moreover, the sentence is structurally straightforward, thus grammatically mirroring its very expression of honesty.

Darcy employs a similarly straightforward style in his marriage proposal to Elizabeth: “In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you” (Austen 170). The concise sentence length is the most prominent exhibition of candor. Darcy does not present a proposal with extended complex sentences, lofty diction, or beatific metaphors, which would be an *artificial* performance of his feelings and intentions. The sentences are short and the brief narrative applies a straightforward logic: 1) There was a problem, 2) I need to solve that problem, 3) I will solve this problem by doing X. The definitiveness of Darcy’s word choice is also noteworthy. There is a struggle that *will not* do. His feelings *will not* be repressed. He *must* profess his love to Elizabeth. These simple but powerfully commanding modal verbs leave no room for ambivalence. Darcy’s feelings and intentions are certain and expressed with the utmost candor, representing a distinctively masculine confidence. This makes Elizabeth’s rejection such a poignant blow. She has not simply rejected him, but the very essence that his masculine identity is founded on. But

before jumping to the conclusion that Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy is a rejection of the candid, confident, self-disciplined masculinity that Darcy so thoroughly represents, it is necessary to recall that Elizabeth *does* eventually marry Darcy. The problem during the first proposal is not that Darcy's masculine characteristics are un-ideal. Rather, he has not yet exhibited another crucial trait of hegemonic masculinity: chivalry. It is not until Elizabeth becomes aware of how Darcy saves damsels in distress—in the nineteenth century sense—in rescuing his own sister from the seduction of Wickham and financially enabling Lydia's marriage to Wickham to prevent scandal, all the while maintaining the most gentlemanly discretion, that Elizabeth agrees to marry him. In short, it is not the candor of Darcy's first proposal that results in failure, but rather the necessity for continued masculine development that delays his marriage to the heroine.

Heathcliff's candor is distinct from Theodore or Darcy's because it is brought out by overwhelming passion. There is thus an inherent conflict in the masculinity of Heathcliff's candor as it contends with Adams's key concept of masculine self-discipline. Is the candor ideally masculine if its derivation is from a decidedly un-masculine root? Take for example when Heathcliff's young son, Linton, arrives at Wuthering Heights after his mother's death. Heathcliff exclaims, "God! what a beauty! what a lovely, charming thing!... Hav'n't they reared it on snails and sour milk, Nelly? Oh, damn my soul! but that's worse than I expected—and the devil knows I was not sanguine!" (Brontë 142). Heathcliff is certainly being honest in disdaining his son. The sickly child probably does seem like he was raised "on snails and sour milk." However, the syntax of Heathcliff's expression diverges noticeable from the straightforward structures of Theodore and Darcy's candid expressions. The punctuation is most radically different, as Heathcliff employs numerous exclamation points and a hyphen to elongate his thought. These grammatical features convey Heathcliff's impassioned emotional state, yet they also speak to a

kind of performance. The charged punctuation readily lends itself to dramatic staging. The performative quality of Heathcliff's expression is also supported with the apostrophes to God, Nelly, and himself. His words arise from a natural candor, yet they are being expressed, specifically spoken *to* others and himself. He knows he is being heard. In this way, Heathcliff exhibits an elusive masculine identity of convoluted candidness: his words derive from unquestionable sincerity but they are spoken in a way that is so dramatically performed.

Thus far I have shown how specific males in *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights* convey facets of the hegemonic masculine identity of the long nineteenth century. Once again, the traits typified in this ideal are virility, as demonstrated by strength and sportsmanship; chivalry and morality; intent to exclude the Other; asceticism; candor; and autonomy, which has not yet been discussed. No man completely represents this identity, but rather this idyllic whole is only understood through synthesizing the most masculine exhibitions of six men over three novels from different time periods and genres. Yet there is one overarching similarity between the major male characters of these works. That is, they express and seek to further develop their masculinity based on autonomy in structural spaces. The following section will analyze how Manfred, Theodore, Mr. Bennet, Darcy, Hindley, and Heathcliff use constructed spaces to both exert the freedom to follow their own will and to liberate themselves from external influence. This autonomy in relation to structural space is not only key to understanding the men's developing masculine identities but also leads to an essential analysis of the Gothic role of property ownership and inheritance laws in challenging and impacting masculine identities.

## Men and their Autonomous Spaces

Manfred evokes the Castle of Otranto as a space that authorizes and promotes his autonomy thereby allowing him to pursue plans of self-determination that resist powerful external influences. Obsessed with securing ownership of the castle upon the death of his sole heir, Manfred devises a plot to divorce his wife, Hippolita, and marry his would-be daughter-in-law, Isabella. Marriage to Isabella is crucial because it would unite Manfred's claim with that of his powerful contender, the Marquis Vicenza, thus transferring all of the power to Manfred. Marriage to Isabella also brings the potential for heir production that would guarantee the castle remaining in Manfred's lineage. There is one major hindrance that prevents Manfred from fulfilling his scheme: the religious authority, Father Jerome, does not see legitimate grounds for Manfred to divorce Hippolita. Thus, religious law thwarts Manfred's authority as governing and patriarchal ruler. The power of religion is most clearly demonstrated when Father Jerome, within the walls of Otranto, flatly tells Manfred, "No, my lord" when Manfred explains his divorce aspirations (Walpole 47). Specifically he declines, "with an air of firmness and authority that daunted even the resolute Manfred, who could not help revering the saint-like virtue of Jerome" (47). Father Jerome exerts authority based on religious law and, while standing up to the tyrannical prince, he also exhibits an "evangelical fervour" that is in keeping with Volkmann's depiction of a distinctly masculine "muscular Christianity." This clearly garners the hyper-masculine Manfred's respect. However, Manfred evokes the space of Otranto to reject Father Jerome's authority and execute his free will: "Father, interrupted Manfred. I pay due reverence to your holy profession; but I am sovereign *here* (my emphasis), and will allow no meddling priest to interfere in the affairs of my domestic" (48). In the end, Manfred does not pay due reverence to Father Jerome's profession and implicitly supersedes the authority of God. Manfred declares

himself “sovereign *here*,” that is, within the space of Otranto. Within the castle walls, “meddling” priests have no right or power to interfere.

Yet when Manfred is without the walls of Otranto, he loses his pretenses at autonomy. In the church dedicated to Alfonso—Father Jerome’s space—Manfred notes the friar’s transformed identity displaying “new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness” (99). It is in this religious structure that Father Jerome will ultimately denounce Manfred: “Thou art no lawful prince” (97). Interestingly, Manfred’s reaction is not one of characteristic violence. Rather, he commands Hippolita, “Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce.—But this meddling friar comes not thither” (97). This establishes a clear war between two men with two schemes in two spaces. First, there is Father Jerome in his space, the church, seeking to reveal Manfred as usurper and restore the reign of Otranto to Theodore, the lawful heir. Second, there is Manfred in his space, the castle of Otranto, seeking to reestablish his legitimacy as ruler through divorce, remarriage, and progeneration. These schemes can only be given voice and agency when the man is in his respective space of power.

Yet for the majority of the novella, Otranto gives power to *two* men: Manfred and Theodore. Manfred harnesses Otranto’s power by forcibly masking the secret of his illegitimacy, thereby maintaining the appearance of monarchical dominance. Yet the castle itself—as living as any character—*wants* to lend its powerful space to promote the autonomy of another: Theodore, its lawful ruler. The castle’s active support of Theodore’s liberty is exemplified in how the young man escapes from under the giant’s helmet. Manfred lifts a torch to discern: “one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap, through which the peasant had pressed himself” (31). The super-natural helmet and natural stone of the castle

pavement, both designed to detain Theodore, have readily restored his autonomy in providing this escape. Though imprisoned twice and frequently detained within the walls of Otranto, it is significant that Theodore is always given voice and agency, thus making it a unique space of autonomy for him, despite Manfred's tyrannical control, which foreshadows his ascent as true prince.

Now I will make a seemingly jarring jump from a medieval Italian castle to a nineteenth century middle class library. While Otranto and the Bennet's home in Longbourn pertain to different time periods, social categories, and geographies, the effect that the structural space has on its male owner is startlingly similar, if not indistinguishable. Just as Manfred uses castle walls to circumscribe his will to the internal space of Otranto, so Mr. Bennet declares his library a space of his personal autonomy in *Pride and Prejudice*: "In his library he had been always sure of leisure and tranquility; and though prepared, as he told Elizabeth, to meet with folly and conceit in every other room of the house, he was used to be free from them there" (Austen 49). Mr. Bennet demonstrates autonomy through his library in two ways. First, he uses it as a space to pursue pleasurable activities, that is, it fulfills his wishes for "leisure and tranquility." Second, he uses the library as a space to keep out that which is not pleasing to him, "the folly and conceit" filling every other room of the house.

Mr. Bennet is also strikingly Manfred-like in how he treats challengers to his freedom in his personal domain. At one moment in the library, Mrs. Bennet tells her husband that he does not understand a matter, to which he superciliously responds, "I have two small favours to request. First, that you will allow me the free use of my understanding on the present occasion; and secondly, of my room. I shall be glad to have the library to myself as soon as may be" (78). Like Manfred in Otranto upon hearing Father Jerome's objections, Mr. Bennet thoroughly

invalidates Mrs. Bennet's opposing opinion within *his* personal room. Not only does he exhibit autonomy in thinking as he pleases, he also verbally expels the contender from his domain. Mr. Bennet's sarcastic tone is particularly noteworthy. Unlike Manfred, Mr. Bennet never menaces violence to exercise dominion over those around him. However, Mr. Bennet's biting sarcasm is perhaps more thoroughly dominating than any physical threat by Manfred. While Manfred only commands a physically domineering presence, Mr. Bennet employs sardonic verbal dominance to mentally cover<sup>10</sup> those in his domain, which I will soon explicate in greater detail.

Darcy's Pemberley estate is the other dominant male space in *Pride and Prejudice*; however, unlike Mr. Bennet or Manfred, autonomy in Darcy's realm does not give rise to oppression or unpleasantness but rather greater inclusion and heightened affability. Elizabeth is astounded upon finding Darcy so altered when they meet at Pemberley: "Never, even in the company of his dear friends at Netherfield or his dignified relations at Rosings, had she seen him so desirous to please, so free from self-consequence or unbending reserve, as now, when no importance could result from the success of his endeavors" (179). In short, Elizabeth and the Gardiners find Darcy a surprisingly delightful and hospitable host at Pemberley, and Elizabeth is baffled because she sees no extrinsic motivation for Darcy to foster a relationship with them. Yet, as I argued [in the previous excised section] in the case of his abstinence from dancing, Darcy is not motivated to comply with a performance for the sake of others. He is masculinely candid and maintains a rigorous self-designed and self-imposed discipline. Then why is Darcy so amiable and welcoming to Elizabeth and the Gardiners at Pemberley? The key is in the fact that

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<sup>10</sup> I am playing off the legal term "coverture," a principle added to the English Constitution in 1758 by William Blackstone stating that, "By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover she performs everything; and is therefore called in our law-french, a feme-covert, foemina viro co-operta; and is said to be covert-baron, or under the protection and influence of her husband, her baron, or lord; and her condition during her marriage is called her coverture" 1:442.

his guests have not “invaded” his space nor have they threatened his autonomy. Rather, Pemberley is a magnificent estate of tastefully fine furniture, loyal servants, and expansive grounds that all suit Darcy’s wishes. More importantly, there is nothing about Pemberley estate or Darcy himself that the characters or the legal system seek to change or undermine. Thus, Darcy enjoys his autonomy at Pemberley and is eager to share his goodwill in this space with its visitors.

The great impact that Pemberley has on Darcy becomes even more striking when he is once again removed from that space and situated in one that is not his own. Upon subsequently visiting Elizabeth at the Bennet home in Longbourn, Elizabeth notes how he “looked serious, as usual; and, she thought, more as he had been used to look in Hertfordshire, than as she had seen him at Pemberley” (230). He demonstrates, “more thoughtfulness and less anxiety to please, than when they last met” and slowly degenerates back to his original depiction as “silent, grave, and indifferent” (230). It is not Darcy himself that has changed per se but rather Darcy’s space that has altered, which has significant implications for the expression of the self. Outside of *his* space, Darcy does not have the complete autonomy that renders his temperament so pleasant. At Longbourn, he must submit to social decorum in a place that is not his own and with people who are below his social class. These restrictions on his freedom are inextricably linked to changing spaces and radically alter his demeanor.

Unlike *The Castle of Otranto* and *Pride and Prejudice*, the characters of *Wuthering Heights* are never shown outside the space of the novel’s namesake, unless they are on the neighboring Thrushcross Grange property. In a legal context, *Wuthering Heights* is the more interesting property of the two, for its ownership changes over the course of the novel from Mr. Earnshaw to Hindley to Heathcliff. Mr. Earnshaw’s death early in the novel prompts his son



Hindley to return from college and assume ownership of the Heights. As a new master, Hindley immediately acts to ensure his personal autonomy in behaving as he pleases and exerting his will over others. First, he cruelly relegates Heathcliff from his position as pseudo-family member to servant, prompting Nelly to pronounce Hindley's treatment "tyrannical" (Brontë 40). However, in addition to verbal abuse and rigid rules, Hindley also asserts his dominion over Wuthering Heights by using the very house as a tool to legitimize his supremacy. Upon realizing that young Heathcliff and Catherine have mischievously slipped away from the Heights, Nelly recounts how, "Hindley in a passion told us to bolt the doors, and swore nobody should let them in that night" (41). Hindley's fury initially seems disproportionate to Heathcliff and Cathy's frivolous escapade. Yet, the children's stunt can be viewed—at least by a new and potentially insecure patriarch—not as a silly pursuit of diversion, but rather as a calculated ploy to challenge Hindley's rule. That is, in breaking free of the walls of the Heights, Heathcliff and Catherine are breaking free of the will of the Heights's master. Thus, when Hindley's space is threatened, he seeks to re-establish his power by exerting absolute control over that physical structure by barring the doors. In this way, Wuthering Heights as a material construction becomes an instrument for exerting dominance (in Hindley's case) and subverting authority (in Heathcliff and Catherine's case).

Wuthering Heights is ultimately used as an instrument of direct conflict between Hindley and Heathcliff, as both men contend for its ownership and associating position of power. Hindley's gambling addiction leads him to mortgage the entire property to Heathcliff and tensions mount as the two cohabit the Heights. One night, Heathcliff returns to find the main door bolted. As he goes around to the back door, Hindley exclaims to Isabella, Heathcliff's wife, "I'll keep him out five minutes... You won't object?" (160). Once again, Hindley attempts to use the structure of Wuthering Heights to demonstrate and legitimize his authority. While in the

first instance Hindley commands his servants to bar the doors, there is a notable escalation in his agency as he now draws the bolts himself. Desperately indebted to Heathcliff, Hindley's attempt to exert physical authority over the Heights is a calculated act to compensate for his lack of legal authority over the property. Nevertheless, Heathcliff easily smashes a stone through the window and springs into the building. The ease with which Heathcliff enters the locked house is reminiscent of Theodore's experience in Otranto: he belongs there, and thus the structure facilitates his will. Within the walls of his legally owned space Heathcliff can then effortlessly exert his autonomy and pummel Hindley to the brink of consciousness. As a child, Heathcliff was let into the locked house by Nelly; whereas, as an adult Heathcliff breaks in with a masculine display of strength and autonomy. Thus, Heathcliff's forcible entry into the barred house represents a crucial metaphoric shift in the property's ownership from Hindley to Heathcliff's hands, which mirrors the legal shift that has already transpired.

The aim of these examples is to demonstrate how properties and spaces (whether castles, libraries, estates, or houses) are crucial stages in which men perform their identity. More specifically, a man's unique space is a tool for him to legitimize and display his autonomy. However, there is a key problem in these texts, which I have thus far only hinted at: *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights* all contain sites of contentious property ownership. Legal problems in Otranto have two layers. First, there is the issue that Manfred's grandfather murdered Prince Alfonso and forged the prince's will to gain power; thus, Manfred, because of his grandfather's crime, is not the lawful heir. The legal situation is further upset when Manfred attempts to legitimize his family's claim through marital union with the Vicenza family. Though marriage with Isabella would indisputably establish Manfred's right to Otranto, Manfred's efforts are delegitimized by the fact that he goes about obtaining this marriage

through illicit means (bribing Isabella's guardians and fabricating a story to obtain a divorce from Hippolita). The issues of property ownership are less convoluted in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights*. In the former, the Bennet's house at Longbourn is entailed; meaning, in the absence of a Bennet son the property will be inherited by the closest male relative, Mr. Bennet's cousin, Mr. Collins. Thus being deprived of their home upon Mr. Bennet's death, the female Bennets can only gain security through marriage and preemptive removal from the family home. In *Wuthering Heights*, Hindley funds his gambling vice by mortgaging Wuthering Heights, which results in Heathcliff's acquisition of the property. In short, while these properties are crucial in the men's sense and portrayal of identity, the ownership of these properties is unsound. These problems result in a terrifying crisis of masculinity, therein disposing the men, arguably against their inclination, to tyranny. The tragedy is that the harder the men strive to reclaim their masculinity through domination, the less they conform to the hegemonic definition of masculinity and the less physical control they have over their properties.

Manfred's tyrannical disposition is introduced at the outset of *The Castle of Otranto* through Isabella's secret relief upon the dissolution of her marriage to Conrad, which has spared her, "from the severe temper of Manfred, who... had imprinted on her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda" (Walpole 20). Isabella's fear of "his causeless rigour," reflects a potent oppressiveness in Manfred's authority because he imposes arbitrary restrictions on the women under his dominion. In other words, he establishes rules not for the sake of justice or efficiency but in order to satiate his megalomania. The use of "temper" is also significant, as the term originally refers to the proportionate combination of elements in the body. This arranging of the elements in the body can be related to the ordering of physical materials in architectural construction. A disproportionate balance of elements in

Manfred's body leads to a "severe temper" or what would be referred to as a choleric disposition. Similarly, an unbalanced arrangement of architectural elements would result in a physically unstable building. This association may seem loose at the moment, yet I will argue that Manfred's unbalanced constitution and the resulting inclination to tyranny is reflected and provoked by the unsound architecture around him.

While Manfred's treatment of the princesses is verbally oppressive, his severity gains a physically violent outlet upon encountering Theodore. Manfred immediately seizes the peasant for pointing out the likeness between the helmet that has crushed Conrad and that of the church's statue of Alfonso. Yet when the youth shakes himself free of Manfred's grip and demands to know what he has been guilty of "Manfred, more enraged at the vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold... ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms" (21). Manfred's escalation in physical violence can be seen as a reaction to Theodore's display of masculine strength. The older prince is enraged by the youth's vigor; thus, his armed assault is a hyper-aggressive response to demonstrate his own superior masculine strength. From a Freudian perspective, his desire to poignard or *penetrate* Theodore with his weapon is the ultimate display of domination. Yet this intensely violent reaction seems rather overdramatic in response to Theodore's action. The youth has not physically threatened or harmed Manfred, but only extricated himself from his grasp. I argue that it is not Theodore's physical display of muscular masculinity that provokes Manfred's rage and counter-display of virility. Rather, it is that Theodore has unknowingly touched on the secret of Manfred's illegitimate rule, which incites the paranoid and anxious ruler. Manfred knows that his usurping grandfather appeased Alfonso's spirit by building the church and the monument to the

saint. Yet his rule was permitted with a limitation, that: “the lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown *too large* (my emphasis) to inhabit it” (1). Manfred lives in perpetual fear that this prophecy will come to pass under his reign; thereby resulting in his loss of the castle of Otranto, which is the physical space that legitimizes and fosters his autonomous masculine identity. In discussing anxieties in Augustan portrayals of manliness Isabel Karremann asserts, “the moments of deepest anxiety are those in which he realizes that his attempts at proving his superior manliness are doomed to fail. This failure provokes even more aggressive displays of manliness...” (Karremann 113). Thus, Theodore’s innocent observation of the *giant* helmet of Alfonso taps in to Manfred’s intense anxiety of prophetic failure to maintain his rule of Otranto and therefore provokes his hyper-aggressive act of physical domination.

It is significant that the narrator specifies how Manfred’s tyrannical behavior—both physical and verbal—is directly the result of his tenuous control of Otranto: “Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane” (33). In short, Manfred has become more callous because he lacks male heirs to secure the rule of Otranto. The narrator’s statement reflects the immense legal significance of primogeniture and how this system diminishes the heirless prince’s power, thus driving him to over-compensate through despotism. Manfred’s poignant awareness of his deteriorating power after Conrad’s death propels his cruel proclamation to Matilda, “Begone, I do not want a daughter” (23). In one sense, this statement could reflect Manfred’s wish for a son to inherit the castle. In another light, Manfred could be implying his desire for Isabella, who can bear him sons. Yet it is irrelevant whether Manfred rejects Matilda for Conrad or Isabella. Both readings reflect his overwhelming obsession with

producing an heir, and act which would validate his masculine identity in two ways. First, it would be a clear exhibition of his sexual virility. Second, it would secure the rule of Otranto, which is the space that guarantees his masculine autonomy.

Interestingly, Manfred's slipping control of Otranto and concordantly diminishing masculine identity is literalized and exacerbated by the very architecture of the castle itself. Frederick S. Frank analyzes the iconography of Otranto and points out, "We are conveyed to a seemingly strong but actually weak piece of architecture saturated with the phantasmic segments of a huge and apparently growing body of the castle's wronged former master" (Frank 201). While Frank focuses on the giant Alfonso, who eventually decimates the castle, I put forth an alternative supernatural figure that also weakens the castle's structure and in fact challenges Manfred's masculine autonomy even more aggressively. When Isabella flees after Manfred's marriage proposal, a portrait of Manfred's grandfather sighs then "quit its pannel, and descended on the floor with a grave and melancholy air" (Walpole 26). This supernatural movement of the interior design defies normal properties of existence and undermines the physical structure of the castle. Moreover, the supernatural presence of Manfred's grandfather even further saturates the competition for sovereignty over Otranto (the race already consists of Manfred, Theodore, and Vicenza). Yet more importantly, this incident sufficiently distracts Manfred, thus giving Isabella time to escape from what would otherwise have been a rape scene. In this way, the supernatural heightens the volatility of the castle, which in turn impedes Manfred from exerting his masculine dominance over Isabella. As a side note, this potential rape scene is particularly disturbing because it is so distinctly devoid of desire. Manfred does not lust for Isabella, though she is young and beautiful, but rather sees her as a surprisingly un-eroticized tool for securing his rule. In this way, Manfred alienates himself from the traditional value of masculine sexual prowess

and conquest. This further emphasizes his myopic obsession with the castle and diminishes his masculinity. In sum, the castle of Otranto is not only legally slipping from Manfred's control but also physically rebelling against him and thwarting his autonomy; a thoroughly emasculating combination.

Though Manfred endeavors to retain his masculine identity as patriarchal ruler through elaborate performances of physical and verbal tyranny, the more assiduously he tries to retain this identity the less masculine he actually appears. Manfred most notably falls short of the ideal masculinity in regards to the characteristic of candor. The ideal man should be frank and inartificial, yet Manfred becomes increasingly more duplicitous and performative while pursuing his scheme. The prince's two-facedness is displayed at its most absurd when he meets with the knights representing the Marquis of Vicenza. The prince weeps and loudly bemoans, "behold in me a man disgusted with the world: the loss of my son has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatness have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wished to transmit the sceptre I had received from my ancestors with honour to my son - but that is over! Life itself is so indifferent to me..." (53). Manfred attempts to deceive the knights into believing that he is no longer plotting to strengthen his rule of Otranto. Yet the reader, fully aware of Manfred's numerous actions demonstrating quite the contrary, easily recognizes his deception. The melodramatic monologue also does little to convince the knights who, "gazed on each other, wondering where this would end" (54). In short, Manfred deludes no one and instead makes himself appear quite the dishonest fool, which clashes with the characteristic ideal of candid masculinity. Therefore, the more effort Manfred exerts in scheming to secure his sovereignty over Otranto, the more he actually alienates himself from the ideal portrayal of masculinity.

Like Manfred, Hindley is immediately portrayed as a hostile figure from the outset of *Wuthering Heights*. When Mr. Earnshaw returns home with the orphaned Heathcliff, Nelly explains, “Hindley hated [Heathcliff]” from their first introduction. Prior to being sent to college, the adolescent Hindley manifests his abhorrence with petty physical abuse, blows and pinches. This childishly “tyrannical” behavior cannot be written off as mere brattishness. In fact, it marks the beginning of Hindley’s decline into the role of terrifying physical and verbal abuser. These antagonistic childhood interactions reveal the root of Hindley’s crisis of masculine identity. In the quest for autonomy, a man seeks to establish himself as secure in his identity and capable of exerting his free will (which, as I have argued, requires a space to exert his free will in). Yet from this very early age, Hindley’s core identity as a son is challenged and diminished. Mr. Earnshaw displaces Hindley’s role as only-son by bringing an orphan boy home and further by christening this newcomer “Heathcliff,” which was the name of an Earnshaw infant who died in childhood. Transferring this name to the new Heathcliff legitimizes the boy’s presence in the family, and challenges Hindley’s position as only-son. Moreover, Mr. Earnshaw shows a clear preference for Heathcliff, which further devastates Hindley’s filial identity: “twice, or thrice, Hindley’s manifestation of scorn [to Heathcliff], while his father was near, roused the old man to a fury: he seized his stick to strike him, and shook with rage that he could not do it” (Brontë 27). Mr. Earnshaw’s sympathies are clearly aligned with the maltreated Heathcliff, so much so that he is provoked to violent threats in protecting his pseudo-son. The fact that Mr. Earnshaw does not execute corporal punishment against Hindley is irrelevant; the threat alone is sufficient to ruin the son’s relation to his father. As Nelly notes, “the young master had learned to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a *usurper* (my emphasis) of his parent’s affections and his privileges; and he grew bitter with brooding over these injuries” (25). Nelly’s



word choice is crucial in understanding that Hindley was not formerly a cruel or imperious child. Rather, his behavior was “learned” as his bitterness “grew.” This is reminiscent of the narrator of *Otranto*’s appraisal that Manfred was “not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked” (Walpole 33). Just as Manfred is provoked to tyranny by his slipping role as prince of Otranto, so Hindley is provoked into tyranny by his slipping role as Earnshaw’s son.

Eventually, as master of the Heights and upon the death of his wife, Hindley’s despotism surpasses Manfred’s in brutality and sadism. Stumbling home in a drunken rage Hindley menaces, “with the help of Satan, I shall make you swallow the carving-knife, Nelly!” (Brontë 50). Violence aside, Hindley’s fury with Nelly is wholly unjust, for her only “crime” has been hiding Hindley’s toddler son, Hareton, from his father’s inebriated aggression. However, more notable than the unfairness of his rage is its sadistic expression. Hindley invokes the aid of Satan to commit a gory, barbarous murder of his well-meaning servant. The intoxicated master continues to escalate his violence in demanding Hareton and exclaiming that he shall crop his son’s ears, for, “It makes a dog fiercer, and I love something fierce” (50). Hindley’s aggression in this case is even more unfounded—for the child has done nothing to provoke his father’s rage—while also being even more vicious and perverted. In fact, Hindley almost appears deranged as he raves about fierce dogs and wields around in search of scissors to exact his demented will. All in all, the scene is intensely detailed as a dramatic performance of Hindley’s tyrannical and sadistic physical masculinity.

As Hindley’s tyranny is so significantly heightened by this point in the novel, long after his childhood tensions with his father have been resolved, the pressing question arises: what is provoking Hindley to act so tyrannically now? After all, he is the secure owner of the Heights and has a son to pass on the property to; therefore, his situation is no longer relatable to

Manfred's. Nevertheless, while Hindley may legally be secured in his masculine identity as patriarch of the Heights, he remains insidiously challenged by his childhood usurper: Heathcliff. Even before Heathcliff returns to the Heights as a rich man to acquire the property from the indebted Hindley, Heathcliff subtly begins to displace Hindley as patriarch of the house. While in childhood Heathcliff once displaced Hindley in his role as son, in adulthood Heathcliff displaces Hindley in his role as father. Continuing the narrative of the previously described scene, Hindley swoops Hareton up and roughly dangles him over the stair railings, only to become distracted and drop the infant. However, "Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical moment; by a natural impulse he arrested his descent, and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident" (51). The narration of this account clearly sets up Heathcliff as the boy's rescuer arriving "just at the critical moment," while Hindley is portrayed as the offender, the "author of the accident." In this way, Hindley fails in his role as father—as protector of his son—and this paternal role is fulfilled by the rival, Heathcliff. Heathcliff's usurpation of Hindley's fatherhood is made even more unsettling, from Hindley's perspective, by the fact that he acts under "natural impulse." That is, Heathcliff does not deliberately intend to rescue Hareton, which would indicate some plotting on his part to assume Hindley's position. Rather, he acts naturally or inartificially to save the boy. This lack of artifice models masculine sincerity while enacting a chivalric deed and demonstrating sportsmanlike skill (abruptly catching a falling child from a stairwell must require some excellent reflexes). In short, Heathcliff shines as an ideal male by several standards of the hegemonic masculinity definition, while Hindley falls short as both a man and a father.

It is interesting to note that Hindley is aware of his increasingly tyrannical behavior, and attempts to justify it by invoking the law. When Nelly attempts to assuage his drunken threats,

Hindley exclaims, “No law in England can hinder a man from keeping his house decent, and mine’s abominable!” (50). The dark side of Hindley’s statement is that he is correct: the law cannot hinder a man from threatening to ram a carving knife down his servant’s throat or crop his infant son’s ears. In this sense, the law does legitimize the patriarch’s despotic rule of the house. This of course is the foundation for the theories in the Female Gothic. However, Hindley too is suffering from pressures in the home. This is not to compare them as “equal” or “worse” pressures, but simply to point out that the home was a space of anxiety for men as well as women. The law may be on the male’s side, yet his home is still “abominable.” In Hindley’s case, within the Heights he remains haunted by his father’s ousted love and becomes increasingly terrified of Heathcliff’s new forms of usurpation of his masculine identity as patriarch.

Hindley’s fears are perfectly legitimate, as Heathcliff ultimately does usurp his position as father and property owner of the Heights. As Hindley enters increasingly further into debt to Heathcliff to fuel his gambling addiction, he concordantly becomes “daily more notable for savage sullenness and ferocity” (44). Hence, the Manfred connection appears again; as Hindley steadily loses the rights to his property, he steadily develops a more volatile and despotic temperament. I have already discussed how Hindley’s barring of Heathcliff from the Heights and Heathcliff’s subsequent forced entry marks the total displacement of Hindley as patriarch. However, this point is worth repeating as it epitomizes how Hindley employs tyranny (bolting the doors to Heathcliff) as an attempt fortify his challenged masculine identity. The property of Wuthering Heights is crucial in this conflict. First, it is the setting, the *stage* where Hindley enacts his tyrannical performance. Second, the Heights is the tool or the *prop* that Hindley uses to exact his will; that is, barring Heathcliff’s entry into the house. Finally, the Heights itself is an

allegory, representing Hindley's diminishing masculinity. Hindley's failure to conform to the hegemonic definition of masculinity—being strong, moral, chivalrous, and autonomous—is recompensed by losing this property to Heathcliff, the man who seems to better encapsulate this ideal.

Although Mr. Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice* is not usually regarded as a patriarchal tyrant on the level of Manfred or Heathcliff, his character illuminates that even middle-class men can occasionally rise to behavior that verges on Gothic tyranny through acts of microaggression<sup>11</sup>. Unlike Manfred and Hindley, Mr. Bennet never threatens physical abuse or appears physically aggressive in any way. However, Mr. Bennet does attempt to assert himself as dominant patriarch just as potently as either Manfred or Hindley, without exercising violence. Mr. Bennet is a master of verbal domination, especially through acerbic use of satire. Wielding his biting wit, Mr. Bennet verbally dominates his daughters, wife, and “usurper,” Mr. Collins.

Mr. Bennet routinely demeans all of his daughters, with the exception of his favorite, Elizabeth. Perhaps the most mordant example is when Mr. Bennet explains that he will permit Lydia to go to Brighton so as “to teach her her own insignificance” and adds, “At any rate, she cannot grow many degrees worse, without authorizing us to lock her up for the rest of her life” (Austen 159). The first statement reflects how little Mr. Bennet values his younger daughter and how willing he is to allow her to realize her defects through embarrassing lessons. This is a particularly negligent parenting technique and demonstrates Mr. Bennet's lacking in the masculine ideal of discipline. A man is supposed to hold himself to a rigorous standard; therefore, a father should hold his family to a rigorous standard. Accordingly, Mr. Bennet's willingness to permit Lydia's floundering in Brighton, away from his authority, reflects an un-

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<sup>11</sup> Rowe, Mary P. “Micro-affirmations & Micro-inequities.” Rowe, Mary P. “Micro-affirmations & Micro-inequities.” *Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*. 1.1 (2008) : 45-48. Print.

masculine indulgence and/or indifference. Nevertheless, while the first part of Mr. Bennet's remark is distinctively unmanly, the second statement has an aggressively patriarchal undertone. This comment is supposed to be comical; that is, Mr. Bennet is not *really* suggesting Lydia be imprisoned "for the rest of her life." However, the reference to female imprisonment should not be taken lightly, given Austen's keen awareness of the Gothic tradition as demonstrated through her effective parody in *Northanger Abbey*. Lydia, in fact, *could* be locked up by Mr. Bennet if the patriarch so decided. The story need not take place in Otranto's medieval Italy for this to occur. Indeed, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* provides a potent example of a locked up woman in a normal upper-middle class home in mid-nineteenth century England. Thus, while Mr. Bennet's remark appears superficially amusing, it is both a trenchant mockery of his daughter and an unnerving reminder of his potential power over her.

Mr. Bennet's satirical prowess is performed at its best in discourse with Mrs. Bennet. The most memorable example occurs after Mr. Collins's proposal when Mrs. Bennet beseeches her husband to compel Elizabeth to marry. Mr. Bennet calls his daughter into the study before him and his wife and says, "An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*" (78). Though many readers rejoice at Mr. Bennet's unwavering support for his daughter's decision, this ultimatum makes Mrs. Bennet appear hopelessly foolish. It is clear that Elizabeth would choose to estrange herself from her mother rather than her father. This is because Mrs. Bennet is consistently portrayed as the embodiment of "ignorance and folly" (162), while Mr. Bennet exudes contrastive "philosophic composure" (205). If a choice must be made between the two, Mr. Bennet surely comes out the victor. Mr. Bennet's ultimatum draws attention to the fact that the rational male is superior to the

sensible (Austen's version) female. And it is even more unnerving that he makes a young female, his daughter no less, second his patriarchal superiority complex. In this way, in addition to being legally marginalized through coverture and the entailment of the Bennet house, Mr. Bennet further eclipses or *covers* the aspirations of his wife through patronizing discourse that establish himself as dominant patriarch.

Yet, like Manfred and Hindley, it could be argued that Mr. Bennet's abusive commentary and perpetual aloofness is not "cruelty unprovoked"<sup>12</sup>. That is, Mr. Bennet did not always exhibit his present behavior and does not necessarily like the man he has become. Indeed, a very different image of Mr. Bennet is portrayed when the narrator describes the young man courting Mrs. Bennet who is "captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour which youth and beauty generally give" (162). The young man enchantment by such romantic ideals as "youth and beauty" is a stark contrast to his older self, so reserved, condescending, and sarcastic. Moreover, the younger Mr. Bennet valued true "good humour" as opposed to the rather nasty humor he seeks as an older man. The narrator attributes these unpleasant changes in his person to the fact that he "had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put and end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem, and confidence had vanished for ever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown" (162). In short, Mrs. Bennet's uncultivated intellect has provoked Mr. Bennet's transformation into a verbal "tyrant." This is an extremely problematic argument, for it superficially plays into "the woman is always to blame" trope. Mrs. Bennet *is* the cause of Mr. Bennet's change in temperament; however, the narrator subtly frees her from fault: "But Mr. Bennet was not of a disposition to seek comfort for the disappointment which *his own imprudence* (my emphasis) had brought on,

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<sup>12</sup> "Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane" (Walpole 33).

in any of those pleasures which too often console the unfortunate for their folly of their vice” (162). In other words, it was Mr. Bennet’s own poor judgment, or “imprudence,” that led him into the unhappy marriage; there was no female beguilement on Mrs. Bennet’s part. Thus, while Mrs. Bennet is a fool, she is at least a straightforward and harmless fool. Perhaps this makes Mr. Bennet an even bigger fool for marrying her. Yet for all that can be said against Mr. Bennet, he does exhibit the masculine ideal of morality in remaining honorable and faithful to that marriage, unlike many other men in such a situation. However, Mr. Bennet, the intellectual, is miserable in this insipid environment and therefore, like Manfred and Hindley, develops a mechanism to assert his will: verbal domination of those around him.

In addition to oppressing his female family members with scathing verbal irony, Mr. Bennet also arms himself with satire to combat his male rival, Mr. Collins, the inheritor of the entailed estate. Mr. Collins is the embodiment of Mr. Bennet’s challenged masculinity, as Mr. Collins’s future ownership of the estate is the direct result of Mr. Bennet’s failure to produce a male heir. Mr. Bennet’s virility is implicitly called into question by the fact that he has five daughters and no sons. Often, women are blamed for lack of heirs because of their purported inability to have children (as Manfred blames Hippolita in *Otranto*). However, Mrs. Bennet has consistently proven *her* ability to carry children. Therefore, in the Victorian fertility blame-game, which does not benefit from a contemporary understanding of genetics, Mr. Bennet’s progenitorial manhood is the one called into question. It may be argued that Mr. Bennet’s masculinity is slightly redeemed by the fact that he is the secure legal property holder of Longbourn. That is, he does own a space in which he exerts his autonomy. However, the entailment of the house to Mr. Collins devastates his position as patriarch. Mr. Bennet declares that Mr. Collins is the man “who, when I am dead, may turn you all [the female Bennets] out of

this house as soon as he pleases;" that is, the laws of primogeniture and coverture will force the line of property transmission outside of Mr. Bennet's nuclear family (42). The situation is even direr for the women than is readily clear from focusing on the entailment alone. Besides losing their home, a side musing from Mr. Bennet reveals that the women would essentially have no financial support in terms of income upon his death: "Mr. Bennet had very often wished before this period of his life that, instead of spending his whole income, he had laid by an annual sum for the better provision of his children, and of his wife, if she survived him. He now wished it more than ever" (211). Consequently, Mr. Bennet's death would lead to the absolute ruin of his family so, like Hindley [discussed in an excised section], Mr. Bennet is a failure as a father. With the backdrop of this legal and fiscal situation in mind, it is clear then how Mr. Collins's presence in the house is a painful reminder to Mr. Bennet of his masculine inadequacy.

Accordingly, it is unsurprising that Mr. Bennet attempts to demonstrate his superiority to Mr. Collins through condescending satirical discourse. Indeed, Mr. Bennet's remarks to Mr. Collins are often quite hilarious, as the man *is* positively absurd. Upon Mr. Collins concluding a particularly effusive monologue regarding his patron, Lady Catherine, Mr. Bennet remarks, "It is happy for you that you possess the talent of flattering with delicacy" (47). Just like in his ultimatum with Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Bennet's use of verbal irony is entertaining for both the reader and the sharp-witted Elizabeth. However, just as before, Mr. Bennet's humor serves a dual purpose: Mr. Collins is rendered more absurd while Mr. Bennet establishes himself as superior. This is a subtle but highly effective way of regaining power. While Mr. Bennet may have fallen beneath Mr. Collins due to matters of legality, he reasserts his dominance with witty supercilious discourse.



Yet before extolling Mr. Bennet's wit as a non-violent mechanism to gain power in a thoroughly disempowering situation, it is worth analyzing how this technique is censured by both Elizabeth and Darcy. Elizabeth repeatedly expresses amusement and respect for her father's "abilities" but reproaches, "so ill-judged a direction of talents; talents, which, rightly used, might at least have preserved the respectability of his daughters" (162). In essence, Elizabeth explicitly condemns (and probably implicitly resents) her father's use of wit as an amusing tool for demonstrating his superiority. There is something foolish, "ill-judged," and inappropriate, not "rightly used," in his behavior. In this way, Elizabeth aligns her father with traits opposite of the ideal masculinity. Mr. Bennet is clearly intelligent, but he is not self-disciplined, as Adams's ideal man should be. Rather than using his intelligence to promote rigor and the proper education of his daughters, whom Elizabeth reproaches as "vain, ignorant, idle, and absolutely uncontrolled," Mr. Bennet indulges in petty jabs meant to quell his inferiority complex (159).

While Elizabeth's criticism of Mr. Bennet is softened due to their bond of filial affection, Darcy is more harsh in his condemnation of Mr. Bennet in a letter to Elizabeth where he denounces the "total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by [Mrs. Bennet], by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father" (137). It is particularly emasculating that Darcy connects Mr. Bennet's impropriety to that of his wife and daughters, who epitomize the negative conventional image of sensible and frivolous womanhood. This explicit connection between the father and his wife and daughters also highlights Mr. Bennet's failure to distinguish himself as a superior man above his female family. Though Mr. Bennet continually attempts to diminish the women through satire, therein exerting his superior masculinity, Darcy's rebuke shows that Mr. Bennet's strategy is unsuccessful. Witty sarcasm is not a sufficient performance of masculinity. Indeed, upon reading Darcy's letter,

Elizabeth comes to censure Mr. Bennet even further: “Her father, contented with laughing at them, would never exert himself to restrain the wild giddiness of his youngest daughters” (147). In essence, Mr. Bennet’s humor is a device to enable his passiveness. He will not “exert himself” to impose any real, worthwhile, instructive authority over his daughters. In sum, Darcy’s linkage of Mr. Bennet to his imprudent female relations and Elizabeth’s critique of his passivity both serve to discredit his use of sarcasm as a masculinizing mechanism.

While the narration often sets up Mr. Bennet’s witty insults to be entertaining for the reader, the narrator also backs Elizabeth and Darcy’s appraisal of this behavior as being un-masculine. For example, when the women return from their first ball at Netherfield, the narrator explains, “on the present occasion [Mr. Bennet] had a good deal of curiosity as to the events of an evening which had raised such splendid expectations” (7). The narrator invokes Mr. Bennet’s sardonic voice with the hyperbole of “*splendid* expectations,” which plays into his intent to raise himself above the frivolities of women. However, Mr. Bennet genuinely demonstrates a “good deal of curiosity” about the ball, seeing as how he *has* waited up to hear about it. This is interesting to point out because it shows that, while Mr. Bennet enjoys mocking the women, he is also subtly invested in what they have to say. He plays into their enthusiasm, thereby associating himself with the feminine.

In addition to, and perhaps because of, his association with the feminine, Mr. Bennet is also subtly associated with the Other. Bingley at one point refers to Mr. Bennet as being “more communicative and less eccentric than [he] had ever seen him,” which clearly suggests that Mr. Bennet is normally uncommunicative and eccentric (238). “Eccentric” originates from a geometric context, as being remote from or not passing through the center, according to the *OED*. As pertaining to people, eccentricity is a display of oddness or deviation from the norm.

Thus, Bingley's characterization of Mr. Bennet as eccentric identifies him with the social periphery. This is a crucial point, for as an upper class member, Bingley could dismiss Mr. Bennet's behavior as different or inappropriate because Mr. Bennet is of the middle class. However, Bingley characterizes Mr. Bennet in a way that is outside of class, as something indefinably Other.

Even Elizabeth identifies her father with some Otherly strangeness: "Neither could anything be urged against my father, who, though with some *peculiarities* (my emphasis), has abilities Mr. Darcy himself need not disdain" (129). Elizabeth's tone almost appears apologetic for her father's purported "peculiarities." While she admits that he demonstrates various oddities, Elizabeth affirms that no claim could seriously be "urged against" her father. This is a very cautious Otherization of Mr. Bennet. He is said to deviant from the norm on various occasions—though specific examples of behavioral difference are never given in the text—yet he is not *too* different. This subdued form of Otherization is fitting for the genre Austen writes in. This is not an eighteenth century Gothic novel, where exotic strangeness features prominently in setting and character types. Austen's marriage plot novel set in contemporary central England could not realistically contain notable Otherness. Yet it is worth noticing how Otherness still slips in to this "normal" novel. This is a preview or perhaps a crucial transition into the insidious Other that sneaks into the homes of the nineteenth century. While in the eighteenth century tradition strange things come from strange places, in the nineteenth century the strange will become something much more terrifying: the uncanny... the familiar made unfamiliar. Mr. Bennet is a transitional figure in this context. While not connected to anything foreign or particularly bizarre, he is portrayed as "eccentric" and has "peculiarities" that make him different and, certainly, less masculine.

On a concluding note pertaining to *Pride and Prejudice*'s insecure property owner, it is worth analyzing Mr. Bennet's character based on Karremann's observation that, "the moments of deepest anxiety are those in which he realizes that his attempts at proving his superior manliness are doomed to fail. This failure provokes even more aggressive displays of manliness..." (Karremann 113). Mr. Bennet is made deeply anxious by the abundance of feminine discourse that surrounds him. In a basic sense, this discourse is overwhelming. There are so many women in his house; moreover, they are a particularly obnoxious "womanly" group of women. The superabundance of women and womanly discourse is a constant reminder to Mr. Bennet of his failure to produce a son, who would have created a more balanced masculine discourse. Mr. Bennet's anxiety is also heightened by the fact that he finds himself caring about the feminine discourse. For instance, he makes such comments to Mrs. Bennet as, "*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it" (Austen 1). Though the statement is dripping with scorn, Mr. Bennet *does* stay to hear what his wife has to say. Thus, by the overwhelming presence of feminine discourse around him and his own interest in it, Mr. Bennet's "superior manliness" is, in essence, "doomed to fail." This provokes his "even more aggressive displays of manliness." The setting of *Pride and Prejudice* in a nineteenth century conventional English town<sup>13</sup> does not afford Mr. Bennet the ability to perform aggressive displays of physically abusive manliness. Rather, he attempts to exert masculine dominance in the only way that he can: verbal abuse. The

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<sup>13</sup> Austen will write explicitly in *Northanger Abbey* why England cannot be the setting for anything Gothic: "Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for. Of the Alps and Pyrenees, with their pine forests and their vices, they might give a faithful delineation; and Italy, Switzerland, and the south of France might be as fruitful in horrors as they were there represented. Catherine dared not doubt beyond her own country, and even of that, if hard pressed, would have yielded the northern and western extremities. But in the central part of England there was surely some security for the existence even of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age. Murder was not tolerated, servants were not slaves, and neither poison nor sleeping potions to be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist. Among the Alps and Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so..." (*Northanger Abbey* 163).

tragedy is that the more vocal Mr. Bennet becomes in mocking his “inferiors,” the less superior and the less masculine he actually appears, for these verbal abuses only draw attention to his failure to exert real authority as a patriarch.

In summary, the purpose of these analyses of Mr. Bennet [and Manfred and Hindley in excised sections] has been to demonstrate how devastating insecure property ownership is on the male’s masculine identity. His personal space is integral to the exertion of autonomy, so as this spaces slips out of his legal power, the man does his utmost to regain the space and reestablish sovereignty. However, the more effort the man exerts to fulfill this aim, the less masculine he actually appears. Aware of this failure, the man descends to the extremes of tyranny and domination (as appropriate to the genre of each work) to compensate, only to the greater diminishment of his masculinity.

## **Conclusion**

Varying shades of masculine identity, intricately wound up with property ownership, correspond to and challenge the hegemonic definition of masculinity. First there is Heathcliff, a dark-skinned orphan. Based on his background he has no legitimate origin, and therefore must gain an identity as well as a property: he is a usurper. What’s more, in becoming a property holder he accordingly transforms from a scrawny “gipsy brat” into “a tall, athletic, well-formed man” (Brontë 87) “in dress and manners a gentleman” (3). In contrast, Hindley represents lost masculine identity, as he loses his positions as son, father, and property owner to Heathcliff. Physically, he becomes an alcoholic degenerate “the worse and the weaker man” (169). Manfred too suffers from a diminishing masculine identity, yet, unlike Hindley countering a usurper, Manfred himself is the usurper. Different from Heathcliff, Manfred does not gain his property through legitimate legal means. Instead, he schemes and clings to his castle with a desperate

effort that is doomed to fail. Despite his self-proclaimed “manly fortitude,” Manfred falls far short of the masculine ideal, lacking virility, chivalry, morality, candor, and autonomy (Walpole 23). Mr. Bennet represents a more ambiguous realm, as a secure property owner who is nonetheless plagued by issues in the legality of inheritance. He is a legal and financial failure as patriarch in providing security for his female family. This failure is emphasized by his inadequacy as a father, effeminization, and Otherization. In contrast, Darcy is the legitimate, unchallenged property owner of the illustrious Pemberley estate. Tall and powerful, he commands the respect of his fellow men and wins the love and esteem of the beloved heroine. Above all shines Theodore as the most classic example of hegemonic masculinity. Strong, chivalrous, moral, disciplined, and autonomous, he not only rises as true sovereign of the castle of Otranto but also appropriately marries within his rank, to presumably function within the legal system of primogeniture.

Yet, even in the case of Theodore, no man encapsulates the entirety of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity. Theodore never excludes the Other to justify his own masculinity. In fact, by English standards, Theodore *is* Other, being from medieval Italy. Darcy too falls short in the characteristic of chivalry. His uncivil denial of Elizabeth’s attractiveness, overheard by the heroine at their first meeting, marks Darcy with impoliteness and pride for the majority of the novel and isolates Elizabeth’s affection. Contrastively, while Manfred’s masculinity is often challenged, he still evinces ideal medieval gallantry when Vicenza’s knights visit Otranto and Manfred tells the herald: “welcome to my castle, where, by my faith, as I am a true knight, he shall have courteous reception, and full security for himself and his followers” (62). Manfred is true to his word and does treat the knights honorably, even when he could, theoretically, have murdered Vicenza and his men and thereby secure his sovereignty of Otranto through massacre.

Mr. Bennet is also not altogether without masculine traits. While for the majority of the novel he demonstrates no self-discipline or disciplining of his family, he does appropriately exert his authority in one matter: refusing to pay for Lydia's wedding attire. This is Mr. Bennet's reprimand to his younger daughter for her brazen impropriety and, surprisingly, he holds firm to his decision (while he does relent to retracting her banishment from the house). Similarly, Hindley, though generally detestable and particularly uncivil to all female characters from his sister to his servants, does demonstrate considerable regard for his wife. There is not sufficient textual evidence to go so far as to describe Hindley as "gallant" in his treatment of Mrs. Earnshaw; however, he must have married her for love, seeing as how "she had neither money nor name to recommend her" (Brontë 39). Indeed, Nelly notes how Hindley "had room in his heart only for his two idols—his wife and himself" and his wife's death in childbirth is absolutely devastating (57). Certainly, this is not a flattering portrayal of Hindley, but it adds depth to his character. He at least has held one woman in high regard and, presumably, treated her gentlemanly. As for Heathcliff, he has already been conveyed as a fluid character sliding along the spectrum of masculinity: physically strong, but Otherized; candid, but un-disciplined; alternately moral and vicious. In short, these classic male characters from Gothic and conventional novels throughout the long nineteenth century, represent the varying shades of masculinities. Predominate in the construction and expression of these masculine identities is the property associated with the man.

In demonstrating the vast arrays of masculinities present in *The Castle of Otranto*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights*, my aim is to reveal a subtle but crucial dilemma: no man holds up to the lofty ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Yet all of the men vigorously attempt to establish and legitimize their masculine identities, particularly in performances that necessitate

their personal properties. Thus, the home is a space of constant anxiety for men. They require the home as both a stage and a prop to perform their masculinity, yet the home itself is often a challenge to the very core of this identity. The Female Gothic has sufficiently displayed how the home is a site of intense anxieties for women oppressed by the rigidity of patriarchal dominance. My study of both Gothic *and* non-Gothic works through the lens of Men's Studies demonstrates how the home is also a site of intense anxiety for men, who are often powerless within the system of English property and inheritance laws. These male and female anxieties are not meant to be compared for competitive purposes; neither situation is "worse." Rather, these anxieties are unifying, representing the agonizing pressure of social and legal laws to conform to a flawed gender model.

In choosing one text that engendered the eighteenth century Gothic, one early nineteenth century text that does not seem overtly Gothic, and another text of the mid-nineteenth century representing the new Victorian Gothic, this study aims to investigate the transition and dissemination of the Gothic tradition. The eighteenth century Gothic is criticized for not being grounded in real homes; thereby, making it unrealistic and seemingly irrelevant. The Victorian Gothic ameliorated this shortcoming and created something far more harrowing: terror within the familiar home. Yet I argue that the fear the Victorian Gothic evokes is not limited to an overtly Gothic or supernatural work like Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*, or a Henry James short story. A deep-seeded fear within the most familiar sphere—the home—appears in all genres, even a romantic Austen novel. For where we live is pivotal in defining who we are, and the experience of determining, constructing, performing, and legitimizing that identity is universally terrifying.



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